Native American Programs Receive Grant from Nez Perce Tribe

by Faith Price

WSU’s Native American Programs was awarded a grant through the Nez Perce Tribe’s Local Education Program Fund this fall. The grant supports two new initiatives for Native students: the Native American Student Ambassador Program, and the opportunity for incoming students to attend the “Calculated Success” program.

In October, four students were hired as Ambassadors to assist with outreach to prospective Native American students. The group travels to Native communities to give presentations and participate in college fairs, serves as tour guides when Native students visit WSU, and makes personal calls to prospective students to answer questions about the Native student experience at WSU.

"I wanted to be able to give back to Native American Programs and encourage other Native students to come to WSU," said Jessica Lawrence, Yakama, one of the newly hired ambassadors. Lawrence will be graduating in May with a degree in Hospitality Business Management.

“It’s good to have students reach out to students because they’re more comfortable asking us questions that relate to their actual concerns,” said Lawrence.

Thus far, the Ambassadors have traveled to Clarkston High school to share about WSU at a recent family night, and given tours to Lapwai High School students. They have made personal calls inviting high school seniors to attend the EXCEL weekend visitation program for Native high school students. They are also producing YouTube videos explaining the application process and services offered at the WSU Native American Student Center.

In addition to supporting the Ambassador program, the Nez Perce tribal grant was used to fund incoming Nez Perce students to attend the “Calculated Success” program. Calculated Success gives incoming WSU students a chance to get a head start on college level math by participating in a two-week summer program in advance of their first semester at WSU.

The grant came just in time to support freshman MyKel Johnson.

“Participating in Calculated Success was such an amazing opportunity for me as a first year student at Washington State University. The transition to college was made so much easier thanks to this program and its commitment to academic success,” said MyKel. "I have never been a 'strong math student' and this program added to my knowledge and confidence in ways I have never been exposed to."

The grant will allow additional students to attend Calculated Success in summer 2016.

Qe ’ci ’yéw ’yew to the Nez Perce Tribe for supporting programming for Native students at WSU!

(More info and meet the rest of the Native Student Ambassadors here)